

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 41-74 are active in this application. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) or under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Hwang et al. are respectfully traversed.

As noted in Applicants' previous response, Hwang et al. was published January 17, 2001 whereas the present application claims priority to German applications DE 10043334.0 filed September 2, 2000 and DE 10109690.9 filed February 28, 2001. To perfect priority to these German applications, Applicants submit herewith certified English translations of the same. Accordingly, it is requested that the rejections over Hwang et al. be withdrawn.

Upon withdrawal of this rejection, the objections to Claims 42, 43, 45, 46 and 48-55 are rendered moot.

Once again, with respect to Claims 60-74, Applicants request rejoinder of these non-elected claims to the allowable elected claims according to M.P.E.P. § 821.04.

Finally, Applicants note that the Information Disclosure Statement originally filed on November 16, 2001 (copy submitted October 15, 2003) and returned to the Applicants indicated that the EP 1108790A2 document had not been considered. This is presumably since this reference was not matched up with the file notwithstanding the fact that it was originally filed November 16, 2001. In any case, another copy of this Information Disclosure Statement is attached along with a copy of the European patent document for the Examiner's consideration. Another initialed, signed and dated PTO Form 1449 is requested with the next communication from the Patent Office.

Application No. 09/919,932
Reply to Office Action of January 5, 2004

The present application is deemed ready for allowance. Early notice of such allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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